THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) Foreign Secretary visited Washington on 21-22 December 2005 for the meeting of the Working Group on civilian nuclear energy and held discussions with US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Mr. Nicholas Burns, on the implementation of India-US uderstanding on civilian nuclear energy cooperation of July 18, 2005. The discussions of the Working Group were carried forward during the visit of Under Secretary Burns to New Delhi on 19-20 January and 23-24 February 2006.

(c) and (d) The issue of Iran was not discussed in meeting of the Working Group on civilian nuclear energy.

(e) and (f) The position with regard to discussions between India-US on civilian nuclear energy cooperation was elucidated in the Prime Minister's *Suo Motu* statement on this subject on February 27, 2006. Furthermore, the India-US Joint Statement issued following talks between Prime Minister and US President on 2 March 2006 underlines the successful completion of discussions on India's separation plan and looks forward to the full implementation of the commitments in the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement on nuclear cooperation. This historic accomplishment will permit our countries to move forward towards our common objective of full civil nuclear energy cooperation between India and the United States and between India and the International community as a whole.

Resolving Sri Lankan Ethnic Crisis

1807. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Sri Lankan President during his recent visit to India sought greater Indian involvement in resolving the Sri Lankan Ethnic crisis and in the economic development of Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, the specific proposals and issues that were discussed during the talks; and

(c) the outcome of the talks one each issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The President of Sri Lanka

briefed the Indian leadership on his approach to the peace process to achieve maximum devolution which preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. The two sides agreed that an enduring solution can emerge only through internal political processes that promote consensus and reconciliation. India reiterated its support for a process of seeking a negotiated political settlement acceptable to all sections of Sri Lankan society within the framework of an undivided Sri Lanka and consistent with democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights.

Both countries also expressed satisfaction at the dynamism of the bilateral economic relationship. The two sides agreed that there was substantial potential for cooperation in the areas of agriculture, information technology and renewable energy. It was also agreed that bilateral cooperation would be accelerated in the field of human resource development. The two sides also discussed proposals for extension of technical and financial assistance by India in developmental projects in the North and East of Sri Lanka as also in several other sectors including health, railways, power etc.

Visit of French President

1808. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the President of France visited India, recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the bilateral and multilateral issues that figured in his talks with Indian leaders;

(d) the outcome of the talks;

(e) whether any agreement was signed during the visit; and

(f) if so, the salient features of each agreements and the benefits to be accrued to the country as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The President of France, Mr. Jacques CHIRAC visited India from February 19-21, 2006. He was accompanied by Mr. Philippe Douste-BLAZY Minister of Foreign Affairs; Mme. Michele ALLIOT, Minister of Defence; Mr. Thierry BRETON;